

# Japan Christian Activity News

PUBLISHED  
BY NCCJ

PROPERTY OF  
Graduate Theological Union

ISSN:0021-4353

OCT 09 1990

#682 SEPTEMBER, 1990

## SEEKING A NEW ORDER LUTHERAN STATEMENT ON "DAIJOSAI"

THE FOURTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE JAPAN  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH ADOPTED AN APPEAL ON  
THE OCCASION OF THE "TENNO'S" (EMPEROR'S)  
ENTHRONEMENT CEREMONY AND THE "DAIJOSAI" (GREAT  
GOOD OFFERING).

### Statement of Faith

God is revealed through our Lord and  
avior, Jesus Christ. The true God is  
revealed through the Trinity and witnessed  
to in the Bible and the Church. We  
believe this revelation to be the true God  
and, thus, we will not accept any other  
gods.

We believe that the God revealed in the  
Bible loves peace and justice. We believe  
that God is working among the people,  
through the Holy Spirit, in order to  
pursue these goals in history.

The Church, as the body of Christ, prays  
for the Kingdom of God to come "on earth  
as it is in Heaven." With this faith, we  
must learn of the needs of the world with  
sensitive understanding and speak out for  
God's justice in this world.

### 2. Appeal to the Government

#### Enthronement:

On November 12, 1990, the emperor will  
proclaim his enthronement from the  
"Takamikura." We are deeply concerned  
that such an enthronement ceremony will  
repeat the thrust toward absolutizing the  
power of the "Tenno" (Emperor) as was the  
case under the Meiji constitution. Such

authority is based on the Japanese myth of  
the emperor reigning from the Takamikura.

We strongly appeal to the government to  
create a new ceremony based on the  
constitutional principle of sovereign  
power lying with the people; the emperor,  
thereby, being only a symbolic figure.

#### Daijosai:

The government has had to recognize  
"Daijosai" as a religious ceremony because  
of its obvious Shinto orientations, thus  
nullifying its validity as a national  
event. However, without any legal basis,  
the government has proclaimed "Daijosai"  
a "public" event of the imperial  
tradition. The national Diet budget for  
the "Daijosai" and the enthronement totals  
8.1 billion yen. We oppose such  
governmental spending on religious  
activities because it violates the  
constitutional principle of separation of  
religion and state. We also oppose  
designating the ceremony a public event.

### 3. Appeal to the Mass Media

We appeal to the media to not praise the  
"Tenno" (Imperial) system in its reporting  
of the ceremonies, but to provide the news  
related to the "Tenno" (Emperor)  
objectively based on an understanding of  
the present constitution and the people's  
right to know the "facts."

### 4. Appeal to Christians

As Christians, we must confess our sins in  
relation to countries neighboring Japan  
especially concerning the pain and  
suffering the "Tenno" (Imperial) System  
caused other Asians. Under the absolutism  
of the "Tenno" (Imperial) System, the  
Japanese churches had been rendered inept  
in decrying the lack of justice and  
equality for all people. We could not  
stop the invasion of other Asian countries

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL Room 24, 2-3-18 Nishiwaseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160 Japan

NOTE: Permission to reprint is granted to all media provided that credit is given and a copy is sent to the editors.



which resulted in the death of over twenty million people. When we think of the pain and suffering of these people, we are forced to consider the implications of life under the "Tenno" (Imperial) System.

Under the new constitution we have embarked on a new course in the history of Japan. However, we have not been able to stop movements which make use of the "Tenno" (Imperial) System to raise nationalistic fervor. As Christians, we must confess our faith in Jesus Christ as the Lord of peace and we must witness to our faith by working for justice in these changing times.

### SEEKING A NEW ORDER

#### BAPTIST STATEMENT ON "DAIJOSAI"

THE THIRTY-THIRD JAPAN BAPTIST UNION GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING TWO STATEMENTS:

#### 1. Opposition to the Government's Involvement in the "Daijosai" Ceremony

The Emperor of Japan reigns as a holy and inviolable figure as guaranteed by the Imperial Constitution. In the name of the emperor, freedom of thought has been suppressed and neighboring countries have been invaded. In the light of an evaluation of that history, the present constitution was enacted. Under the present constitution the Imperial House Law abolished the "Daijosai" ceremony which was based on the fictitious concept of the "Tenno's" (Emperor's) divinity (the Imperial Edict in the beginning of the year 1946).

The government announcement issued on December 21, 1989 recognized the religious orientation of the "Daijosai." However, at the time when the imperial throne is to be inherited, the government has indicated that the "Daijosai" is to be a public event which will respect both imperial traditions and the constitution. This is nothing but deception. What the government is doing is violating the principle of separation of state and

religion which is guaranteed in the present constitution. We are fearful that the government is taking a retrogressive course in its understanding of the "Tenno's" (Emperor's) sacred and inviolable status.

Japan will inevitably be looked upon with suspicion by the neighboring countries which had become the victims of the authoritarian "Tenno" (Imperial) system.

We oppose the government's involvement in the "Daijosai" ceremony.

August 29, 1990

#### 2. Appeal for Peace and Human Rights

The extensive degree to which Japan's democracy is vulnerable to the forces of absolutism was proven by two incidents when Mr. Motoshima, mayor of Nagasaki, and Dr. Yuge, President of Ferris Women's College, were both shot because of their public stance relative to the emperor's war responsibility. These incidents indicate to us that the "Tenno's" (Emperor's) sovereign power remains unquestioned in the overall social milieu.

Along with these terrorizing acts the Minister of Education has ordered public schools to use "Hinomaru" as the national flag and "Kimigayo" as the national anthem in school ceremonies. This enforcement of authority only suppresses the freedom of speech, especially of those people who are proclaiming publicly Japan's war responsibility relative to other Asian countries. It is important that we not close our eyes to past mistakes but confess the sins we have committed.

Through democratization of eastern Europe, the Berlin wall has fallen and Nelson Mandela, who fought against Apartheid in South Africa, was released after 28 years in prison. The roles of Christians who worked for peace and human rights against these autocratic social systems based on different political ideologies and racial discrimination were of immeasurable value in bringing about these new realities.

In this changing times we are chosen to be Christian messengers in order to bring reconciliation to the world. There are



any people who are still suffering in various wars being waged around the world. In Japan perpetuate discrimination against Ainu people, against Korean residents, against "Buraku" people and women, and continue to look the other way in relation to the reality of violence against children. We must share in the pain and suffering of the people and struggle for justice, peace and freedom.

#### Appeal to Christians:

To take action in solidarity with people who are struggling for children's rights and to appeal to the government to ratify the "Treaty for Children's Rights" which was adopted in the Forty-Fourth United Nations General Assembly.

To promote peace education in churches and Christian groups and to learn about Japan's war responsibilities by seeking ways to live together with other Asians based on the acknowledgement of Japan's mistakes in the past war.

### ECUMENICAL CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN

On September 23--25, the Ecumenical Women's Conference was held at the National Women's Education Center in Saitama Prefecture under the theme, "Women's Roles in the Churches: Affirming Our Faith on the Occasion of the "Daijosai" Ceremony." Seventy-one women from Hokkaido to Kyushu came together for worship and discussions on this theme.

#### Three speakers made presentations:

Akiko Yamashita pointed out how the "mother complex" may be seen in the "Tenno" (Imperial) System. Reverend Lee Sun Ai spoke about prostitution under the "Tenno" (Imperial) System. And Rutsuko Shoji discussed the experiences of three generations of Christian women under the "Tenno" (Imperial) System.

Yamashita, a researcher for the Center for Japanese Religions, explained the history of the modern "Tenno" (Imperial) System

from the 19th century. The role of women was set according to the ideology of the Imperial Household under the National Shinto religion. Expectations for women were limited to motherhood which was her role in the "Tenno" family system.

The Women's Liberation Movement started with the investigation of how this motherhood role model started in Japanese society. Japanese society is built on Buddhism, which came to Japan in the 6th century. The "Tenno" (Imperial) System was influenced by the motherhood principle--the focus of Japanese culture. This motherhood principle is the root of discrimination against women in Japanese culture.

Christianity came into Japan through the elite classes, who supported the "Tenno" (Imperial) System, not seeing any conflict with their own faith. The motherhood principle taken up by the Church suppressed women, naming their sexuality evil. The present liberation movement attacks the motherhood principle in the "Tenno" (Imperial) System. In order to establish a feminist theology in Japan, the "Tenno" (Imperial) System, with all its sexist expectations of women, must be disassembled.

Reverend Lee, Korean editor of "In God's Image," talked about her experience vis-a-vis the Korean situation under the "Tenno" (Imperial) System. In order to protect Japanese women of the elite classes, Korean women were used as "comfort girls" for Japan's military. It is estimated that about 20,000 women were used during the war in this way. Lee addressed the issue of what the elite women of Japan were doing during this time.

Shoji spoke of the reactions of three generations of women to the repressive "Tenno" (Imperial) System. While her grandmother and mother were unable to speak out against the injustices which they witnessed, women today must participate in the liberation of all women.

In the evening, women at the conference gathered to study the Bible, seeking meaningful relationships between women and men in Scripture. While the study of



Judges 13--16 began with a focus on Samson, the women moved the discussion toward a focus on Delilah and her role in carrying out God's plan.

The third day of the conference focused on the "Daijosai" and what the women of the Church can do to oppose the "Tenno" (Imperial) System. Each women proclaimed one area of commitment to be made in this effort. The conference ended with worship and a pledge to meet again the following year.

### **SANYA**

### **THE WORKERS CENTER**

Every morning around five, weather permitting, anywhere from two to four thousand day laborers gather in the section of Tokyo called Sanya, hoping to be hired for a day's work of manual labor at an average minimum wage of 10,200 yen per day. These laborers (an estimated 10,000 live in Sanya) live day to day. Whether they have a place to sleep at night or food to eat depends on whether or not they can work. If they are too old or are injured or too sick to work they do not get paid. For most of the workers the New Year's holiday is the worst time because work stops for several days and so does the pay.

Many came to Tokyo from rural Japan looking for work over the past two and a half decades. Some came alone, others had to leave behind families; many were never able to return. Every person has a different story.

In each of the major cities in Japan there are sections where day laborers gather. Among them there is Kamagasaki in Osaka, Kotobuki-cho in Yokohama, Sasajima in Nagoya and Sanya in Tokyo.

Brokers hired by company's in need of manual laborers for designated projects, construction for example, come with micro buses, vans or trucks to the site where the day workers gather every morning, hiring the workers needed for the day's

work and transporting them to work sites located throughout the city.

If there is work, the laborer can afford to pay the 800 yen a night to stay in cheap hotel called "Doya", if not there is no place to stay, leaving many to sleep on the streets. Some build makeshift shelters out of cardboard boxes to protect them against the elements. Many freeze to death every winter.

The dominant image among foreigners of the Japanese male work force is that of company men in business suits leading busy but secure lives as lifelong company employees, reaping the benefits of Japan's high economic growth. But the contradictions which exist in all so called first world countries are also present in Japan. One only needs to go to Sanya for that to become clear.

Day laborers have no guarantees. When the economic situation is going well there is a need for many workers but when there is a slow down the demand for labor also falls. In such a situation the use of day laborers is a convenient way for companies to ensure a high profit margin with no responsibility for the laborers who are the backbone of their existence. In other words, the system ensures that workers can be used and discarded at the convenience of the company.

Also complicating the situation is the relationship between the company brokers and organized crime ("yakuza"), both interested in profiting from the cheap labor. The "yakuza" are involved for the purpose of protecting and maintaining the company hired broker. The conflicting interests of this alliance and the Sanya workers and their union, "Sanya Sogidan" (responsible for negotiating with the brokers on behalf of the workers) is often the source of problems which sometimes result in violence.

If we use the image of a pyramid to describe Japan's "Tenno" (emperor) system, laborers such as those in Sanya would be at the bottom while the "Tenno" finds his place at the apex. In Japan the "yakuza" and the right wing are said to be linked, and the right wing is supportive of the "Tenno" system and its



continuation. When there is a ceremony related to the "Tenno" the police in their effort to maintain control keep a special watch on Sanya.

#### WORKERS WELFARE CENTER UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Until now the social services that both church, secular groups and city administrators have provided, such as medical care, consultation and charity related work, have fallen short in efforts to protect and support the livelihood and rights of laborers, according to labor activists in Sanya.

About six years ago those struggling for the rights of workers in Sanya decided to make a documentary about the laborers' situation - the center of which was a man named Sato Mitsuo. Because of his efforts to expose the situation faced by the laborers he was killed by a "yakuza" family operating out of Sanya in December 1984, and the movie making was stopped in the process. When Yamaoka Kyoichi attempted to continue the work of the film he too was killed in January, 1986, after the movie was completed in December 1985.

These two men were motivated by the thinking that it is necessary to have a place in Sanya where the laborers can come for support services, programs, medical care and fellowship. A place built by the laborers, to meet the needs and ensure the rights of the laborers, and under their control. Existing activities in Sanya, although they sought to give the workers what they needed, weren't initiated by the workers themselves. Based upon this thinking the need for a workers center became clear and the decision to forge ahead was made.

Christians who supported this thinking and were committed to the project joined forces with other active groups in Sanya. Construction of the center is now half way completed. The building, "Sanya Rodo-sha Fukushi Kaikan" (Sanya Workers Welfare Center) will also serve as a small church under the name "Nihonzutsumi Dendoshu." The United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan), an NCC/J member, purchased the property for the building and is taking a leading role in raising funds for the project along with the workers and other

concerned groups. The expense of such a project, the cost of the land and construction of the building is running approximately 220,000,000 yen (US\$ 1,629,629.)

Rev. Tomura Masahiro, head of the Kyodan's Special Committee on Yasukuni Shrine Issues, whose involvement in Sanya has spanned over 30 years, will be one of the facilitators of the center and pastor of the church.

Located in one of the busiest sections of Sanya, near the entrance of a shopping arcade, the center will be very accessible to the workers. Truly a project of the community the center is being built by the workers themselves along with the help of other sympathetic citizens - strictly on a volunteer basis. Outside companies will only be hired for more specialized work for things such as water, gas and electricity installment.

As part of fund raising efforts people were asked to purchase a square clay tile for 1,000 yen, on which they could draw or write whatever they liked. Tiles contributed from all over Japan have been brought to Sanya and will be used in the interior of the building, remaining as a symbol of support for the project from individuals nationwide.

During this process a company was hired to transport the finished tiles from the Kansai area, but at first refused, not wanting to go into Sanya. For many who live in Tokyo and are aware of its existence, Sanya is a place they don't want to enter. Many are prejudiced against the workers living in the area and have an image of them as reckless, dangerous and dirty. Yet, a good number of Tokyoites have never been to Sanya and don't even know that it exists.

Ordinary people see and appreciate the results of the labor made by the hands of Sanya's residents. Although the results are often tangible the workers themselves are made invisible.

#### ACTIVITIES

The center will offer health care services, not in the form of a clinic but



for consultation and referral purposes. There will be a place where workers can go for advice and consultation, specifically regarding their legal rights as workers. A section specially concerned with rights of Asian migrant workers in Sanya will also be part of the center, thereby ensuring the support of non-Japanese speaking day laborers. There will be a large room where a variety of programs and events can be held such as meetings, educational programs, movies, and a place for rest and relaxation. The center will assume much of the share of the community's involvement in these important areas.

Operating out of the center will also be a dining area and small shop which will open at 5 a.m. where workers can buy healthy food at low-cost. This, like all the other areas of the center, will be staffed by volunteers.

The center is also a church, and although worship and other traditional church activities will be carried out they are not the main purpose of the center. While motivated by their Christian faith, Christians involved in the center are guided by the question, "What can Christians do to support and protect the life and rights of the workers in Sanya?" The building is a kind of offering to the workers and they are its guiding force.

Money is badly needed, both to complete construction and for continued maintenance. To assure continued financial support for the center a program was created whereby people pledged to donate 2,000 yen (about US \$15) every month. The number of supporting members is up to 160, but to ensure payment of debts already incurred and for continued upkeep, it is estimated that 500 more supporting members are needed.

Fund-raising has not been easy. Although Japan is known as a rich country, the wealth appears to be concentrated in government and big business. And the movement for workers rights and the interests of large companies, who seek profit from cheap labor, are less than compatible, therefore money must be raised from individuals and concerned groups.

Day laborers in Sanya are left on the bottom rung of society, rather than earning respect from their employers they are used and thrown out when their usefulness is expended. A new way of thinking and a new level of cooperation among concerned groups is embodied in the center, which rejects the way workers are used and seeks concrete ways to ensure their respect and protection of their rights.

\*Donations can be sent to: Sanya Rodo-shi Fukushi Kaikan c/o the Shakai Linkai of the United Church of Christ in Japan, 2-18 Nishi Waseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160 Japan. Donors in Japan can send the money through your local post office, using the following #: Tokyo 4-403373.

**NCCC/USA  
ECUMENICAL MISSION STUDY  
ON JAPAN**

Every year the NCCC-USA (National Council of Churches of Christ - USA) sponsors a mission study to one country for its member churches. The study topic for 1991 will be Japan.

The mission study itself will consist of a study book which seeks to introduce to U.S. Christians the Japan that Japanese Christians confront today. The book's editors have placed emphasis on Christian witness and the challenge Japanese society imposes upon Japanese Christians rather than a more institutional approach to Christianity in Japan.

The book is broken down into four parts: I - Christianity in Japan; II - Japan: The Group Society, with subheadings of "Inside the Group: Security and Constraint" and "Outside the Group: Discrimination and Witness"; III - Japan's Role in the World Today; and IV - Joining Hands in Mission. Included in each section are vignettes which serve to illuminate the issues through the individual witness of a Japanese Christian.

The study book to be printed by the NCCC-USA's Friendship Press was written and



ited by Carolyn Francis (a United Methodist Missionary) and Rev. Nakajima Saaki, General Secretary of the Kyodan United Church of Christ in Japan.)

In addition to the study book a scrapbook is being compiled by Judy Newton (UMC Missionary) and Tabuchi Mayumi, and a study guide and Map'n Facts to assist teachers in their use of the materials compiled by Pat Patterson (Coordinator of UAC.)

Print and audio-visual materials are also available to supplement the mission study program. Other supplementary materials are still in the process of development. Study travel seminars to Japan are being planned by NCCC-USA related churches in conjunction with the mission study. The EC/J will assist in coordinating these seminars.

### ARRESTS IN KOREA

Chang Yoon Jae, who was elected Youth President of the CCA (Christian Conference of Asia) at its Ninth General Assembly in Manila, was arrested as soon he arrived in Incheon Airport in Seoul on July 9th. Mr. Chang was returning home from Manila where he had been working as a program assistant for the CCA since April 1989. He is a member of the EYC-K (Ecumenical Youth Council in Korea) and the Presbyterian Church in Korea.

While in Manila Mr. Chang was also acting as director of the International Cooperative Committee of the Ecumenical Youth Council (EYC) and in that capacity he sent posters of the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students in Pyongyang which he received from the WCC, to a student association in Korea. Based on this alone a warrant was issued for his arrest on charges that he was violating the NSL (National Security Law).

Before returning home Mr. Chang had received assurances from the authorities that he would not be arrested for his activities concerning the festival. Under the NSL he could receive a maximum prison

term of seven years for actions which the government interprets as supporting north Korea. His trial is being carried out as JCAN goes to print.

Despite public declarations by President Roh which support moves toward reunification and dialogue between north and south, the arrest of Chang Yoon-Jae and others continue.

Also arrested on July 11, were three staff persons of AALARI (Asia, Africa, Latin America Resource Institute): Director Kim Myong-Shik, General Secretary Puh Sah-Hyon, and Researcher Lee Jae-Ho. Yuh Jae-Hyon, President of Sonamu Publishing House was also among those arrested.

The arrests were said to have been a result of a book published by the above-mentioned people on the true facts of the Cheju Island Uprising of April 3, 1946, which the government wants to suppress. However it is curious to note that the actions were taken after the fact, as the book has already been published and is available in bookstores.

Kim Myong-Shik, director of AALARI, is a chairperson of Chonminyon (National Democratization Movement United) and actively involved in international solidarity work. He had been working to promote the foundation of a Pan-Democratic Opposition Party. He and the others were also charged with violating the NSL.

A letter protesting the arrests was sent by the Korea desk of the United Church of Christ in Japan signed by 160 individuals and groups. Protest letters calling for the release of the above persons and all prisoners of conscience can be sent to:

President Roh Tae Woo, The Blue House  
Seoul, KOREA

### VINCENT CHENG RELEASED

After over two years in prison in Singapore, Father Vincent Cheng, a Catholic peace worker, was released. He was arrested in May 1987 along with 21 other people under the Internal Security Act (ISA). The Singapore government accused them of involvement in a communist plot to overthrow the government, all



except Cheng were eventually released. His release was made under the condition that he present himself at the security agency headquarters and that he remain in the country.

### **STUDY TOUR TO CHINA**

A study tour sponsored by CCRAI (Center for Christian Response to Asian Issues) and the NCC/J's China Committee, was held from July 14-21.

Fourteen members composed of Clergy, seminary students, teachers, journalists, housewives and ecumenical workers, visited four cities over the one week period. The objective of the tour was to study the reality of China's Christians and Churches after the Cultural Revolution.

Specifically they sought: dialogue with the CCC and the leaders of the Three Self-Movement; wanted to study the work of the Amity Foundation i.e., education and social welfare programs; explore future cooperative relationships between Japan and China; and meet with those involved in theological education.

The church in China is growing rapidly. Since the end of World War II the Christian population in China has grown at least twice as fast as the growth of the Chinese population. Yet the CCC faces a shortage of pastors. Sufficient theological training was not available for a number of years during the Cultural Revolution, leaving a gap in the number of trained pastors and an aging clergy.

During the ten year period of the Cultural Revolution, 1966 to 1976, churches throughout China were either shut down or used for other purposes, and Christian organizations disbanded. Christians were forced to worship clandestinely.

The period after the Cultural Revolution was one of rebuilding and resurrection, with new churches being built at a rapid pace. The Church is also in process of rebuilding its relationship with the

government. The government passed a constitutional law in 1982 supporting freedom of belief.

Denominations do not exist, and all non-Roman Catholic Christians are members of the CCC. The Church refers to itself as 'post-denominational.' A member of the study tour commented on how good it felt to worship with a unified body, not broken down into denominations.

The Church in China is based upon the Three Self-Movement: self Government, self-support and self-propagation. They do not have any foreign missionaries nor do they accept any financial support from churches overseas. They feel that the nurturing of Chinese Christians is the responsibility of the Chinese themselves. The Three Self-Movement has a long history but has taken on new meaning in China's recent history.

Yet although they want to be self-supporting they recognize the importance of unity with Christians throughout the world and are now engaged in receiving foreign guests and would like to explore future cooperative relations.

The tour members noted the active participation of women in the church, saying that a large number of women appeared to hold positions of leadership among both clergy and lay people.

The struggle of Christians during the period of the Cultural Revolution seems to have helped to unify the church and to make Christians more aware of the work of the Holy Spirit. Through these difficult experiences they became more hopeful and are going forward with prayers, asking for the prayers and understanding of Christians throughout the world.

---

A NCC/J SPONSORED "SYMPOSIUM ON NATIONALISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA" WILL BE HELD NOVEMBER 16 - 18, 1990, AT TOZANŌ, HAKONE. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT THE NCC/J.

---

JCAN Staff: Munetoshi Maejima, Aiko Carter, Liann Ainsworth, Anthony Carter, Dinah Hall

---